

Self-Realization or Deification of Man

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# SELF-REALIZATION

OR

## DEIFICATION OF MAN

Its Methods and Stages According to the *Yogavasishta*.

A LECTURE

Delivered at

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by

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## PREFACE

An attempt is made in these pages to present in a synthetic manner the various methods of Self-realization scattered here and there in The *Yogavasisth Mahararamayana*. It embodies my notes of a Lecture delivered on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1935, at Benares, under the auspices of the North India Theosophical Conference. The credit of this pamphlet reaching the hands of the reader belongs to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath Saheb, General Secretary, Theosophical Society (Indian Section), who first published it in two consecutive numbers of his Journal, *Theosophy in India* and then got them reprinted in this form. So I am no less grateful to him than the reader.

B. L. ATREYA

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## DEIFICATION OF MAN

### ITS METHODS AND STAGES ACCORDING TO THE YOGAVASISTHA

(A lecture delivered at the North India Theosophical Conference, on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1935 by Dr. B. L. Atreya, M.A., D. Litt.)

After preliminary remarks thanking the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society for helping him to popularise the Yogavasistha the lecturer said: -

The Theosophical publishing House at Adyar has done me a great act of kindness in having undertaken to publish my voluminous work of about 700 pages on the Yogavasistha, about half of which is already printed, and it is hoped that it will be ready before we meet at Adyar in December next to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee Function. For such a patronising attitude of the great Theosophical Society I shall ever remain grateful. And it is in the fitness of things that the Theosophical Society, which has done immense work in popularising the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagvadgita*, should also have the privilege of popularising the *Yogavasistha*.

The *Yogavasistha* is in no way a less important spiritual treasure of the ancient India. "The saying about it, among the Vedantins", Dr. Bhagavan Das points out, "is that it is a work of the *siddhavastha*, i.e., for the philosopher-yogi, who, having mastered the theory, is passing on to the practice of it, while the other well-known works, even the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sutras* are works of the *sadhanavastha*, i.e., for those who are yet trying to master the theory." According to the most God-intoxicated saint of modern India, the late Swami Rama Tirtha, it is "The most wonderful work...ever written under the Sun, which nobody can read without realising God-consciousness." In the words of the author, himself, whosoever he may have been, "It is the Encyclopaedia of all spiritual lore"! The work professes to give us the philosophy which was taught to Prince Ramachandra of Ayodhya by his preceptor, the venerable sage Vasistha, and which made Ramachandra what he has been, namely, an Ideal Man.

I value the *Yogavasistha*, not because it is an ancient Sanskrit work, nor because it professes to give us the teachings of Vasistha, nor even because it is a treasure-house of all ancient wisdom. I appreciate the work because of its rationalism, its empiricism and its non-sectarianism. It is extremely modern in its outlook and its philosophical outlook and mystic methods are in conformity with the most up-to-date scientific, philosophic and mystic views, as I have tried to show in my *Yogavasistha and Modern Thought*. I regard it my great privilege, due probably to some of my past aspirations, to have come in close contact with this great work. And I am very glad to have this opportunity to place before you, if I can succeed in doing so, the art of Deifying ourselves, which is the greatest and finest of all the arts, as laid down in the *Yogavasistha*.

In India, philosophy has never been only an intellectual pursuit of knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. The task of a philosopher here is not over with his having constructed a

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metaphysical system which satisfies the intellect. The intellect is not the whole man. He has other aspects, equally or probably more alive in him, which seek for satisfaction. Man aspires to seek for Power and Joy as much as for Knowledge. It is really doubtful whether man would have philosophised at all, if he were absolutely happy and if all his wants are satisfied. The chief concern of man therefore is not to know what God is but to know how he can become God. If the Self-satisfied and Perfect Absolute God is ever free from want and is Blissful in Itself, what is that to us? It will be like an enormous treasure of wealth existing somewhere which we cannot use. That everything is dear to us for our own sake is an eternal truth discovered by Yajnvalkya long long ago. An important part of the task of a philosopher, therefore, is how the ordinary human life which is characterised by suffering and restlessness may be transmuted into the Perfect and Blissful, Divine Life. This is what the author of *Yogavasistha* attempts to do. Here we shall have a bird's-eye-view of his method of realising God-consciousness.

“All creatures” says the author of *Yogavasistha*, “strive to be Happy” (VIa. 108-20)<sup>2</sup>. But hardly any one is found happy in the world. “The world is full of misery and suffering in all directions” (I. 27-31).<sup>3</sup> All the suffering of the world is, however, due to ignorance of the real nature of the Self, the world and their relation. It does not touch the wise man who knows what is worth knowing and who has attained the right outlook (II. 11-41). “The root of all suffering is cut off by the vision of the Self” (V. 75-46). Ignorance of the Self is the source of all troubles, and the knowledge of It is that of decay less Bliss and Peace. (V. 5-23). One may rule over the entire world, yet one will not attain Peace unless one knows the Self” (V. 57-34).<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT IS THE SELF?

What then is the Self, the knowledge of which brings about an end to all the sufferings of the individual? According to Vasistha there are four views about the Self current among men of various grades of evolution, the fourth of which is the right view that must be realised in order to be really happy. The first view is “I am the body” (V. 11-14; V. 73-11). The second is that “I am the mind” (VI a. 124-19). The third view is that “I am the Spirit which is above and beyond the body and mind and which is subtler than even the hundredth part of the point of a hair” (V. 17-15). The fourth conviction about the Self is that “I am the entire Universe and exist in the state of subtle etheric voidness. (V. 17-17). I am everything in the Universe – the sky, the directions, the gods, the demons, darkness, clouds, oceans, air and fire etc. (V. 73-3-4). All that exists in the Universe is a portion of myself, as waves of an ocean, are of the ocean (IV. 22-33). I am the fragrance in flowers; I am the beauty of leaves and flowers; I am the beauty of beauties; and I am the experience behind all the forms. (V. 34-52). He seeth truly who seeth thus” (V. 22-33).<sup>5</sup> The real Self is thus identical with the Brahman which is thus described in the *Yogavasistha*: “This entire network of the expansive Universe is the manifestation of the Brahman” (VI a. 11-16). The Self is therefore that Reality from which all the beings of this universe arise, in which they stay and into which they merge; the Consciousness in which the knower, known and knowledge; the perceiver, perceived and perception (i.e. the subject, the object and their relation) and the agent, the

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action and the instruments appear and disappear. It is the Immense Joy from which the sprays of joy are scattered on the earth and in the Heaven; and for which all creatures live (I. 1-1-3).<sup>6</sup>

To know this Self is the ideal of us all. Unless we have come to this realization, we cannot be happy. To have the fullest consciousness of our being this Infinite Whole is the goal of all beings which they will reach at some time or other. Humanity has evolved so far as to have a glimpse of this state in what is called the mystic experience sporadically experienced by some. This experience, being different from the three well-known states, the waking, dream and sleep – is called the fourth (turiya). In this we have some far-fetched likeness of the Divinity that we are. (VI a. 124-26; V 64. 48-49).<sup>7</sup>

## KNOWLEDGE-THE ONLY WAY TO SELF-REALISATION

According to Vasistha there is no other way to self-realization than Knowledge. Asceticism, pilgrimage, distribution of alms, sacrifices, bathing in the sacred rivers, reading of the Scriptures and performance of the prescribed duties, etc., are of no avail (VIB. 174. 24; VIb. 197. 18). It is through knowledge alone that the individual can realise his God-head. Knowledge is the only means through which the Divine Consciousness dawns (III. 6.1.2)<sup>8</sup>.

Bhakti or devotion to any personal God or a teacher is not required, and is not of much use in self-realization. Vasistha is a staunch believer in Self-reliance. He says emphatically: “Oneself is one’s own friend or enemy. If one does not save oneself, there is no other remedy (VI.B.162.18). What is not attained by oneself through one’s own persistent effort...cannot be attained anything else in all the three worlds” (IV.43.18). The real God that ought to be worshipped is one’s own Self. Any other God need not be worshipped at all. “Those who, leaving the God residing within their own heart, go to other Gods, are like those who, having thrown away the precious gems they had in their hands, desire to collect ordinary glass-pieces” (V.8.14). Gods, when they are pleased with our devotion, cannot bestow Self-knowledge on those who do not think for themselves (V.43.10). Devotion to Gods, like Vishnu, is invented only to put on the right track those fools who run away from study, effort and thinking. (V.43.20). The artificial and showy ways of worshipping God are only for the ignorant and for those whose minds are not fully grown up and are fickle. (VIa.30.5.) It is through knowledge alone that the God residing within the heart can be found and attained (III.6.1). Even a Teacher, however, wise he may be, cannot deify an individual who does not himself think and make effort at Self-realization. “If a spiritual Teacher can raise one up without one’s own effort, why does he not raise up a bull, an elephant, or a camel?” (V.43.16). So, nothing great is ever achieved through any God or Teacher (V.43.17). Whatever is anywhere or at any time achieved by any one is achieved by him only through the application of his own force (V.43.13)<sup>9</sup>.

Shankaracharya lays great emphasis on the renunciation of active household-life for Self-realisation. Tyaga and Sannyasa seem to be quite indispensable for Self-realization according to him. Early Buddhism is also a religion of Bhikshukas (recluses). The

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*Bhagavadgita*, however, seems to preach that the duties enjoined upon us by the Shastras are not to be given up. They are to be performed without attachment or personal motive. Absolute renunciation of action is neither possible nor required by Krishna. The view of Vasistha is very much like that of Krishna with regard to actions. According to him, performing or giving up any kind of action, whether it be religious, moral or worldly, is immaterial for Self-realization. (VIb.199.31). It is foolish, according to him, to believe that action can be renounced. Life is action, Thought is action. As long as one is living or thinking, one is acting. (VIb.28.8; VIb.2.31.42; VIb.199.5). Renunciation of physical and worldly activities is impossible. The root of action is desire or will. That is really to be cut off in order to save oneself from the binding effect of action. (VIb.2.45). Personal desire and willing are to be given up and not actions. “They, who give up external actions without having given up desires for them, effect a renunciation which is no renunciation at all. They, in fact, try to beat the empty space with a stick. (VIb.3.34). The devil of renunciation devours those fools who attempt that renunciation of actions which is no renunciation at all” (VIb.3.26)<sup>10</sup>. For Self-realization, according to Vasistha, one has not even to go to a forest renouncing the worldly life and activities. The busy home-life is not bar to Self-realization. Renouncing the activities of life and residing in a forest away from worldly disturbances do not in the least help one whose mind is fickle and restless. “The home itself is a quiet forest for one whose mind is peaceful, whereas a forest is like a noisy city full of men and activities for one who is not at peace within” (VIb.3.38)<sup>11</sup>. The story of the queen Chudala and her husband Shikhidhwaja in the Nirvana Prakarana is a beautiful illustration of this fact. Vasistha is very emphatic on this point. According to him, a wise man should prefer not to retire from the busy life of the world, although it is in no way binding upon him. (V.26.16)<sup>12</sup>. Most of his liberated living men (*jivanmuktas*), i.e., those who have realised their Godhead, rule over their kingdom, and give the benefit of their wisdom to others. Neither devotion to any personal God nor Renunciation of activities is therefore, a means of Deification according to the *Yogavasistha*.

The right knowledge which deifies man consists in getting fully convinced through one's own thinking that all the objects of the world are Brahman, which is one's real Self, and nothing else. (V.79.3). “The conviction that the Paramatman alone – the infinite, beginning less and endless Consciousness – is the only reality is the real knowledge” (V.79.2)<sup>13</sup>. This right knowledge can be acquired only through one's own thinking and effort. “No other agency than one's own sharpened intellect can bring this Truth home to one” (V.12.18)<sup>14</sup>. One should think oneself about the nature of the world and find out what is real and what is unreal and then should accept the truth. (5.5.8)<sup>15</sup>. The goal of all philosophical thinking according to Vasistha is Truth (5.5.8), the Guide is the Reason (V.12.18) and the source (*pramana*) is the Experience (II.19.16; III.42.15; III.64.53). It is through logical interpretation of our own experience that we arrive at Truth which brings Peace (II.14.53)<sup>16</sup>. But in order that we may be able to think correctly, it is necessary that our mind should be purified and trained. This training of mind is affected through the study of philosophical works, through association with the wise, and through living a pure and noble life. (V.5.5.)<sup>17</sup>. A sincere student of Truth should always keep all the windows of his heart open to receive light from all directions, but he should never depend upon and be a slave to any particular

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creed or Scripture. The Scriptures do not help very much. (VIb.197.18)<sup>18</sup>. And if the Scriptures make some statements which are illogical or irrational and against the verdict of Experience, their authority is to be rejected. “Reasonable statements even of a child ought to be accepted, and the statements of even the Creator are to be thrown away like a straw if they are unreasonable (II.18.3). The works written by ordinary men ought to be valued and studied if they are rational and give us enlightenment, whereas those of even the Rishis are to be rejected by the devotees of Reason, if they are other-wise. (II.18.4). A sentimental person is helpless. He is like one who prefers drinking unwholesome water from a well because it was constructed by his dear father, and is throwing away the wholesome Ganges water near at hand.” (II.18.2). The Self is not shown to us by any Shastra or Guru. It is seen by oneself through one’s own knowledge arrived at through one’s own thinking. (VIa.41.15)<sup>19</sup>.

*Jnana* or Knowledge that has been pointed out by Vasistha as the only means of Self-realization is not to remain a mere intellectual conviction, as most of the philosophical creeds remain in case of the vast majority of men. The intellectual conviction must in course of time turn into a direct intuition. Nay, more. The individual should gradually expand into the Absolute and should live the life of the Absolute. Self-knowledge in the fullest sense is the actual living in the Absolute Experience. It is complete identification with the Divine Being. It is bringing oneself in the perfect tune with the Infinite. It is thinking as God would think, feeling as God would feel, and acting as God would act. It is actually becoming the Divine Being. It is the actual realization of the Goal of life. The *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Yogavasistha* all are unequivocally agreed upon Deification being the Goal of the true knowledge. Our philosophy should therefore not remain an intellectual creed only. It must be lived by. Those who do not live by their philosophy are called *jnanabandhus* by Vasistha in contradistinction to those who live by their philosophy, called *jnanins* by him. “He is a *jnanabandhus* who does not bring his knowledge into practice” (VIb.21.34). Vasistha prefers an ignorant person to a *jnanabandhus* (VIb.21.1)<sup>20</sup>, for he is far from the real knowledge, yet he thinks that he knows (VIb.21.6). Knowledge which is not put into practice vanishes in course of time. As Philo said, “The Mind that wishes to hold God must itself become God”.

This kind of living Self-realization is not magically produced in a moment. Our finitude is of a very long standing. A mere intellectual enlightenment may convince us of the illusoriness of our finitude, yet the illusion continues to be experienced. Vasistha, therefore, urges upon us not to be satisfied with mere knowledge but to make constant and earnest efforts (*abhyasa*) to actualise our knowledge and to realise our Godhead. (V.92.23.VI.b.67.43; VI.a.11.1.)<sup>21</sup>. The technical name given to the practice in Self-realization by Vasistha is *Yoga*. Its Ideal is “That fourth kind of Experience which means sharing in the Absolute, which is realization of unconditioned Bliss, which is of the nature of Consciousness; in which other experiences-waking, sleep etc., are not even potentially present” (VIa.128.50.51).<sup>22</sup>

## PRACTICAL METHOD OF SELF-REALISATION

What then should be the actual course of the process of Self-realisation? The *Yogavasistha* suggests a definite scheme of the method of Self-realisation which does not neglect any aspect of our life. Our present life has three aspects – spiritual, mental and physical. The first may be said to correspond to what has been called the sub-conscious self by modern writers. The second is our conscious mental life of thoughts, emotions and desires etc. The third is the physical body which is being run on by the perpetual movements of the vital currents (*pranas*). All these aspects of our personality have very intimate connection with one another. In order that we may cease from finite experience and may live in the Absolute Experience, it is necessary that we should free ourselves from the limitations of the body, mind and individuality (our subconscious self). We therefore, require a scheme of culture or practice which may enable us to transmute ourselves into the infinite Brahman by taking hold of that side of our experience for which we are most fit. Vasistha therefore suggests three lines along which we should proceed to realise our Godhead, and also tells us that any one of them may be selected according to one's convenience and bent of mind. Thus he says: "The term *Yoga* stands for (1) Deep affirmation of the One Reality, (2) Control of the Mind and (3) Stopping of the movements of the vital currents (*pranas*) (VIa.69.27.). If any one of them is fully accomplished, "the other two follow" (VIa.68.40.)<sup>23</sup> He is, however, inclined to prefer the second method, namely, the control and culture of the mind, to the other two, probably because it is easier than the others and it is also more attractive to a highly cultured man. "Of all the three methods", says he, "the control of the mind is the best because it is comparatively easy to effect and soon leads to Peace" (VIa.69.29)<sup>24</sup>. We shall now learn about these methods in details.

### I. PRACTICE IN DEEP AFFIRMATION OF THE ONE REALITY.

"Through constant practice in Deep Affirmation of one's being one with the One Reality, the mind comes to Peace, and when the mind is merged in the Self, the activity of the pranas is stopped" (VIa.69.48).<sup>25</sup> This practice of Deep Affirmation may be effected in three ways: One may meditate on the fact of his being one with the Brahman and go on with all his activities, thoughts and emotions, affirming that he is that Brahman. This process is called Brahma-bhavana. In connection with it Vasisitha says: "One becomes that which one constantly affirms oneself to be (*bhavayati*); one fills oneself with power, however great one may wish, in accordance with one's affirmation (IV.11.59). The Self becomes the Infinite Whole (*anatam akhilam*) by affirming itself to be that (IV.11.60). The mind of him who meditates on the Absolute Brahman vanishes for want of finite objects and the activity of the Pranas also stops, leaving the Absolute Experience shining alone" (VIa.69.52).<sup>26</sup> Secondly, one may affirm one's oneness with the Absolute Brahman through realising the absolute non-reality of objects than the Brahman. Everything being Brahman, there is nothing real in itself. This process is called *Padartha-bhavana-tyaga* or *Padartha-abhava-bhavana*, i.e., realising the absolute non-reality of objects other than the Self. It is affirming the Self by denying the

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not-Self. Vasistha says: "They can practice Affirmation of the Brahman in themselves who with the help of the Scriptures and logic try to realise the absolute unreality of the subject and the object. (III.22.27). Without the realisation of the absolute unreality of the world and the ego, Freedom which consists in the absence of the experience of the finite ego and the objective world, is not realised" (III.21.12).<sup>27</sup> A modern writer rightly says: "Denial is the creative force of mind used as a dissolving or disintegrating power" (Wase: *Inner Teachings and Yoga*, p.37). So by constantly denying our limitation and finitude, we can dissolve them and realise our Freedom and Infinite nature. Thirdly, through abstracting and separating the Spirit from the objective, factors of our experience we can apprehend it in its real nature and thereby affirm our identity with it. This process is called *Kevali-bhava* by Vasistha. The Absolute Brahman is above both objectivity and subjectivity, both of which are relative. *Kevalaibhava* consists in affirming the Self to be free from both subjectivity and objectivity (III.4.53). The Self being realised as free from both subjectivity, and objectivity, all desires, likes and dislikes, drop down from the personality, and the movements of the prana come to rest (III.4.54).<sup>28</sup> All this seems to have some meaning which can be understood only when one actually takes to the process of Denial and Affirmation. Compare what a Western writer of the twentieth century has written with regard to God-realisation: "The first great stage or degree is where you realise the unreality of all those things which you have hitherto considered real. It is the great denial of the reality of external things, in the light of the "all-ness" of God, the Changeless One. The reality of the changing temporal universe has to be denied, and the denial must be followed by a mental affirmation of the perfection of the One Reality. (p.30)...The second stage or degree is where, having dissolved the gross and imperfect in the refined and perfect, the Light of the Logos (Cosmic Consciousness) appears. The One Reality is seen...The third initiation is the Synthesis. It is a point where you come back to the things of the external world and see that, informing them, in every atom, in every part, and in every speck of space is the living, breathing presence of God" (Wase: *The Inner Teachings and Yoga*, p.33).

## II. THE CONTROL AND STOPPAGE OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE MIND.

The MANASA (mind) is the most important concept of Vasistha's philosophy. It is that which in its essence and static aspect is the Brahman and in its dynamic aspect becomes the individual and the world. The philosophy of *Yogavasistha* is the statics and dynamics of the mind. The movements of the mind towards objectification bring into existence the individual ego and the world-experience with all its good and evil, pleasure and pain, life and death etc. The stoppage of this tendency of the mind, which in fact is the annihilation of the mind as such, is another name for the realisation of the infinity of the Self. Our being an individual is responsible for our experiencing the illusory objective world. The very moment we succeed in breaking the shell of individuality we are the infinite Whole. "The release from the world of trouble, risk and adventure", as Prof. Radhakrishnan puts it, "can be had only by losing the separate self" (*The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 449). Bertrand Russell likewise says: "A too powerful ego is a prison from which man must escape

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if he is to enjoy the world to the full" (*Conquest of Happiness*, p. 183) and "The man who can centre his thoughts and hopes upon something transcending the self can find a certain peace in the ordinary troubles of life which is impossible to the pure egoist" (*Ibid*, p.95). Kingsland also says: "The individual self must be *lost* before the Self can be found" (*Rational Mysticism*, p.422). "All mystical teachers have taught that it is only in proportion as the self – the lower, personal self – is lost, that the Self can be found" (*Ibid.* 241). James Allen, the great modern age sage of England has also beautifully put the same Truth: "Seeking to save his personal life, man forfeits the greater impersonal life of Truth; clinging to the perishable, he is shut from the knowledge of the Eternal...Love of self shuts men out from Truth, and seeking their own personal happiness they lose the deeper, purer and more abiding bliss. He who has yielded up that self, that personality that most men love and cling to with such fierce tenacity, has left behind him all perplexity" (*A Book of Meditations*, p.216-217). Thus the more we cease to be individual minds or egos (i.e., centres of individual willing, individual thinking and individual feeling), the more we are the real Self. And if we could totally cease to be minds *i.e.*, the individual selves, we are the Absolute Brahman shining in its own glory. The mind is the nave of the wheel of the world-illusion. If one can stop it from moving, the world-wheel stops, and ceases to trouble us (V.49.40). One should, therefore, apply all one's efforts, strength, intelligence and ingenuity in controlling the mind, the nave of the wheel of the *samsara* (VIa.29.7-8). By annihilating the mind the world-experience is annihilated (V.50.14). When the mind is given up, the Absolute Peace, the pure and spotless One remains (VI.a.93.44).<sup>29</sup> According to Ashvaghosha, the great Buddhist philosopher also, the world vanishes and enlightenment dawns when the mind is annihilated: "If we could overcome our confused subjectivity, the signs of individuation would disappear, and there would be no trace of the world of objects" (Suzuki: *Awakening of Faith*, p.56). Gaudapada Acharaya, the great teacher of the Advaita Vedanta similarly says: "The whole duality of whatever form, is simply a phenomenon of the mind, and it is never experienced when the mind ceases to be mind" (*The Mandukya-karikas*, III.31).

How then to control the mind and dissolve it into the Infinite Brahman? "The mind", says Vasistha, "cannot be controlled without the proper method (V.91.34)<sup>30</sup>. Those who do not take recourse to the right method and proceed at random are obstinate (*hathah*). They meet with danger at every step and undergo one trouble after another" (V.92.40)<sup>31</sup>. Some of the methods of dissolution of the mind suggested by Vasistha are: - (1) Realisation of its unreality through philosophical thinking; (2) avoidance of imagination or day-dreaming (*samkalpochchheda*); (3) distaste for the objects of sense-pleasure; (4) renunciation of desires; (5) eradication of the feeling of the ego; (6) practice of detachment (*asamgabhyasa*); (7) attainment of equanimity; (8) mental renunciation of every possession and (9) practice of constant Samadhi (intense concentration on the Reality). We shall take them one by one and note here in brief what Vasistha says on every one of these methods.

**1. Philosophical thinking:** - "The giving up the ego (mind) is easier than the opening of the eye or crushing of a flower. There is hardly any difficulty in it. (VIa.111.31). A thing which is taken to be real on account of ignorance will vanish when true knowledge is attained (VIa.111.32). The ego (mind) is only an illusory conception in the Absolute Self like the

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appearance of a snake in a rope and of water in a desert (VIa.111.34)<sup>32</sup>. The ego or mind, being thus realised as unreal or illusory feeling within our infinite Self will lose itself in the Self and we shall realise ourselves to be the eternal and Infinite Brahman.

**2. Giving up of imagination or day-dreaming:** - “The mind is dissolved when there is no imagination (V.13.80). The experience of the world-illusion is due to our imagination; it vanishes away when imagination is completely discontinued (VIa.33.42).” How then to cease to imagine? “What difficulty is there in putting an end to the imagining activity? Negate imagination with the help of imagination (VI.54.18). Imagination is negated by the negation of what is affirmed (IV.54.13). Through *bhavaparyaya* (opposite idea) the effect of creative imagination can be annulled” (IV.34.16)<sup>33</sup>. The idea underlying these statements is that when something is imagined by the mind, it is forthwith created in the objective world, and the author of it is bound to it. To get rid of it, one must send out an opposite current of imagining activity negating the previous affirmation. Both the positive and negative ideas will neutralise each other and will leave the Absolute Self shining in its own glory in the experience of the individual which is no more individual. In the *Mandukyakarikas* of Gaudapadacharya also we find the same idea. “The mind ceases to be mind when it ceases from imagining” (III.32)<sup>34</sup>.

**3. Distaste for the objects of enjoyment:** - Our bondage to finitude is to a great extent constituted and prolonged by our fascination for the so called pleasures of the world. We run after them and go on imagining for ourselves such occasions and situations as may bring us into contact with this or that object of pleasure, with the result that we always have an objective world before us. To be free from this state of affairs, we must begin to cultivate distaste and indifference for the objects of pleasure. Vasistha, therefore, tells us, “Desire for the objects of pleasure is bondage; giving it up is liberation (III.35.3). As long as indifference for pleasures is not generated in the mind, so long full freedom does not accrue (V.24.37.38)<sup>35</sup>. How then to attain this indifference? The answer is simple. Think of their illusoriness. Realise that every pleasure has within it the seed of pain. Think that even those who have the pleasures for which you hanker are in no way happier than you. Think that the pleasures for which you longed in the past and which you got eventually have not made you happy. This is what Vasistha calls *vichara* (thinking) about the nature of pleasures. (V.24.62; IV.35.4)<sup>36</sup>. The second answer given by Vasistha is: Know thyself! When you come to know what you really are, you will learn that your own Self; the ultimate source of all happiness which you are seeking in vain in the objects of pleasure. (V.24.53.54)<sup>37</sup>.

**4. Renunciation of desires (*vasana-tyaga*):** - Renunciation of desires is a very important requirement for dissolving the mind to realise the Self. It is desire that really binds us to any object, to any kind of objective world. The world around us, the environment in which we are placed, the people by whom we are surrounded, the family in which we are born, the bodies that we are associated with, and the powers and capacities that we have, are all the results of our own desires. We are being tossed up and down in the ocean of the world; we wander here and there; live this life or that, simply as dragged by our desires. All our desires are omnipotent in so far as they are fructified. But, unfortunately they fructify when we have already shifted our interest from the object which we formerly desired. But we must

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have by our side what we have already desired, no matter whether now we like to have it or not. This is the irony of life. It is how desire binds us. This is what causes suffering – not to have what we desire then and there, and to have it when it has ceased to be the object of our present desire. Moreover, every desire, when it is cherished, gives us a promise of the happiness of its fulfilment; but when it is nearing its fulfilment, or is being fulfilled, the promised happiness quickly and imperceptibly shifts itself to the object of a new desire. This tantalising process goes on endlessly. This fact makes us wander through the endless *samsaras*, without ever coming to rest or peace. It is why Indian philosophers, from the time of the Upanishads, have always emphasised the renunciation of desires as a very essential condition of obtaining Freedom. “When all the desires that dwelt in the heart are forsaken, the mortal becomes Immortal and reaches the Eternal” (*Kathopanishad*. II.6-14). It is so, simply because when we cease to desire anything finite, we become free from experiencing it as a content of our world-experience. The individuality is constituted by a shell of desires within the Absolute Experience. Breaking the shell of desires (which is the same as annihilation of the mind, for mind is a tendency to desire and to imagine the objects of desire hypostatized) is allowing the individual to partake of the limitless Absolute Experience. It is like the breaking of a bubble, which is now no longer a bubble, but the ocean. In fact, between ourselves and the Infinite Brahman, the desire for something finite is the only barrier. When this thin wall of desire is demolished, we are no longer separate from the Absolute Whole. No wonder, therefore, that Vasistha repeatedly urges upon his hearers to give up desire (*vasana*). (VIa.94-5; V.17-7; V.17-8; 17-3; III.22-8).<sup>38</sup> How then to be free from desire? The first requisite is the conviction that it is an evil that must be warded off. One should realise how helpless desire makes us, how powerfully it takes a hold upon us, and that all our troubles and suffering have their source in desire. (I.17.39,1; V.15-10)<sup>39</sup>. One should also be convinced of the fact that really speaking there is no object in the world so exclusively good, pleasant or beautiful as may be worth desiring. There is also no object in the world so exclusively evil, painful or ugly as to be worthy of our aversion (desire to get rid of) or *heya* (worth discarding). There is really nothing *upadeya* (worth obtaining) or *heya* (worth shunning) in the world, because from the ultimate point of view of the Self, there is nothing else real in itself. (IV.45-42, 43)<sup>40</sup>. So, really speaking, there is no loss or gain in our inability to get a thing or in our getting it. There is no loss or gain to the Self in the decrease increase of worldly possessions. (IV.45-35)<sup>41</sup>. It is the idea of value in objects that is the seed of desire. The very moment we are convinced that the objects of our desire or aversion can neither do us any ultimate good or harm, we shall cease to desire or hate them (we must remember that hate is a negative desire). Another very important fact that we should remember in connection with the renunciation of desire is that the renunciation of desire cannot be successfully effected by the negative method of suppression merely. As Dr. Freud of Vienna, the great seer and prophet of modern Psychology has been telling the world that no natural desire (instinctual tendency or impulse) can be made extinct from the personality by forceful suppression. By this kind of attempt, the desires only settle deeper in the personality, and hiding themselves from our limited consciousness, trouble us in various ways. Our being unaware of them is no guarantee of their non-existence. They are like the secret societies which work in the dark and weaken the personality by dividing its strength and ultimately place it at their mercy and disposal. Vasistha was not unaware of this law of

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mental life. Such desires he calls as sleeping desires (*supta vasanah*) and this kind of forceful forsaking of desires he calls the devil of renunciation which devours the renouncer himself. (VI.a.10-20; 26, VI.b.3-26; VI.a.10-14)<sup>42</sup>. A repressed desire, in fact, is as dangerous as a sleeping lion. Vasistha therefore advised Ramachandra to become “a Great Enjoyer, a Great Renouncer, and a Great Man of Action” (VI.a.115-1)<sup>43</sup>. “A great enjoyer is one who enjoys all the natural pleasures without either keenly aspiring for them or shunning them. (VI.a.115-21)<sup>44</sup>. So there cannot be any need of suppressing any of the natural impulses in the case of one who has no narrow moral or social notions. His renunciation is not the renunciation or giving up of any natural function of the body. It is the liberation of the unnecessary thought and emotion from it.(IV-57-25)<sup>45</sup>. It is in fact unfulfilled instinctual impulses and suppressed tendencies that absorb a great deal of our thought and emotional energy. So “A Great Renouncer is one who detaches his thought from all his desires, impulses, fears and convictions; who acquires a right attitude of mental renunciation towards the entire objective world,” (VI.a.115.34,38)<sup>46</sup>. And “a great man of action is one who performs indifferently all the activities demanded by the occasion – no matter whether they involve love or anger, pleasure or pain, or are regarded as moral or immoral, lead to good or bad consequences” (VI.a.115-12)<sup>47</sup>. This high ideal is not easily attained. Therefore, as long as an individual is governed by the moral ideas of good or evil, he should take recourse to a conscious substitution of some desires by others gradually. The method consists in substituting the good desires for the evil ones; and then better ones for the good ones; and then the best and the noblest for the better ones. This process of sublimation should go on until the desire embraces the Infinite Good. An Absolute Motion is Rest, so a desire which comprises within its object the Absolute Good is really no desire. It is a craving for the Infinite which must precede our becoming the Infinite. The moment we become the Infinite the desire leaves us forever. The small shell of our desires that constitutes our individuality thus goes on spreading and expanding more and more all around, until it embraces the dimensions of the Absolute Experience, and ceases to be an individual shell. It is, as previously pointed out like the enlargement of a bubble into the ocean. (IV.57.20-24)<sup>48</sup>.

**5. *Losing of the Ego:*** - It is our limitations to and identification with some particular aspect of the infinite Whole that constitutes our individuality. The very moment we affirm ourselves to be something; we hypostatize ourselves as individuals and commence to live a life of isolation and suffering. Assertion or affirmation of the Self to be something is the commencement of the worldly career, for the very moment we affirm ourselves to be something, the other aspects of the Absolute Whole are denied of the Self and are relegated to the sphere of the not-self. But the Whole as such never being separated into parts, there arises in us a desire for the not-self, giving rise to a series of innumerable lives and deaths, which will continue until we realise our being the Whole instead of only a part of it. The Ego or self-affirmation (*ahambhava*) is therefore to be completely got rid of to realize our Godhead. (VIB.26.29; V.13.17)<sup>49</sup> Prof. Radhakrishnan similarly points out: “So long as we feel ourselves to have individualities of our own, we will be beset with conflict and contradiction, pain and pleasure, but when once we disinterestedly give ourselves up to the whole, there is an end to all discord” (*The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, p.437). How then to be free from the ego? How to cease from self-affirmation in the particular aspects of the

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Absolute Whole? Vasistha says self-affirmation would die a natural death when we come to know through philosophical reflection that it is false from the Absolute point of view, when we become convinced that we are in fact the Whole Reality including even that which is denied by our act of affirmation of a part. The affirmation of one's being the Absolute Whole will also in course of time negate the affirmation of his being only a part. Or, the very moment one affirms oneself to be something; one should also affirm that he is also that which is denied in the previous affirmation. (VIB.8.3; IV.33.43, 46)<sup>50</sup>.

A practical scheme of gradual merging of the ego in the Cosmic Consciousness is suggested in the following passages: "Let the aspirant gradually withdraw his senses from their respective objects. Let him dissolve the idea of his body, senses, mind and individuality into the respective Cosmic Elements from which they arose. He should, for example, dissolve the idea of the earthly part of his body into Earth, watery part into Water, fiery, into Fire, airy, into Air, and etheric, into Ether. In the same way the organs should also be merged into their respective Sources. The ears should be merged into the Directions, skin into the Lightning, eyes into the Sun, tongue into Water, the feet into Vishnu, the anus into Mitra, the generative organ into Kasayapa, the mind into the Moon, the intellect into Brahma. These are the Cosmic Casual Gods. Having thus merged and dissolved (in imagination) his individual personality into the Cosmic Personality, let him now feel that he is the Cosmos. Now let him merge Earth into Water; Water into Fire; Fire into Air; Air into Ether; and the Ether into the Great Ether which is the Source of all things in the world. Let him now realise that he is the Cosmic Subtle Body. He should then merge the subtle body (Cosmic) into the Unmanifested and Undifferentiated Objectivity in which the entire world exists without name and form and which is spoken of as *Prakrti* by some, as *Maya* by others, and *Avidya* (Void) by logically minded thinkers. Having merged everything therein let him now feel that he is the *Avyakta*, the Unmanifested Source of the entire world. There is a fourth Subtler State of Existence (the Absolute *Brahman*) which is the inexhaustible Source of all these. To experience It, let him now meditate on It and merge himself into It" (VIa.128.1-25)<sup>51</sup>. It will not be difficult to grasp the idea of the possibility of realising the Cosmic Consciousness in this way, if we remember that according to Vasistha an individual, on whatever plane of manifestation he may feel his being, is a mode or differentiation of the Whole with which he is ever identical, although he does not realise this fact. The reason why he does not realise is that he is too much occupied only with a portion of the Whole, which he calls his body or personality. Another principle to be kept in view, to understand this process of the realisation of the Cosmic Consciousness, is that our bodies are sustained only by our thought or idea of them, by our interest in them and by our feeling that they are real. If we could succeed in totally withdrawing our thoughts, feelings and interests from them, they will no longer be felt to be an item or content of our consciousness, as it happens in temporary forgetfulness, in dream, in sleep, in hypnotic trance, and in the phenomena of alteration of personality. It is very interesting to note that a contemporary writer expresses an idea very similar to that of Vasistha: "It is not difficult in the light of the present day beliefs, to pass in thought from the visible universe to its indwelling material Substance-principle; and to do this helps us to pass in turn from the garment of the Spirit of God to that which it clothes and expresses, namely, Infinite Life and Intelligence Itself"...To do this, "In thought, the material universe must be

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resolved into the ether, and the ether resolved into Spirit-life, will, mind – into God...This is the process of Involution, and this path consciously taken, brings you the Divine Powers of a new and regenerated Consciousness” (Charles Wase: The Inner Teachings and Yoga, p.25,26).

6. **Cultivation of Detachment:** - Attachment to the objects of our experience, to actions and to the bodies is the bond that never allows the mind to be liberated from finitude and particularity. One should therefore try to get rid of attachment to realise the Self. (VIb.28.23; V.63.33)<sup>52</sup>. The first step in detachment is to be detached from the body with which we feel so much identified. (V.67.26.).<sup>53</sup>

7. **Cultivation of Samata (equanimity):** - Much of the force of the finitising power of the mind will be averted by cultivation equanimity. For when every state of existence is looked upon with an equal eye (*samabhavana*), when every object is received with equal satisfaction, when every person is regarded equally, then one has expanded one's individuality into a personality that is no longer interested in the affairs of a particular body, or of a particular mind, but lives a life of the Self which is equally present in all beings. We should therefore be equanimous always, under all circumstances and with regard to all persons. Universal Brotherhood is an expression of this equanimous attitude. (V.13.21; VIb.198.10; V.18.61.62, V.20.4).<sup>54</sup>

8. **Mental Renunciation of everything:** - To possess is to limit oneself. According to the great psychologist, William James, our possessions constitute a part of our self, called the material self by him. So long as we own a particular aspect of the Reality as our own and disown others as not ours, we cannot enjoy union with the Whole. When the Absolute Whole is my Self, and the entire universe a manifestation of the Absolute, all beings are in myself and I am in all beings, it is not only absurd that something is mine while another is not, and to cling to one reject another, but also harmful, for the limit of our thought or belief is the limit of our being. Either you own everything or nothing, if you have to realise your unity with the all-transcending Absolute. But the meaning of both renunciation and possession of “all” things has been misunderstood in the history of the world, simply because people could not very often distinguish between the standpoint of the body and that of the Self. Renunciation of everything as it has been preached and practised in India is not what Vasistha has taught to Ramachandra. Actual giving up of or running away from anything is not the true renunciation of it according to Vasistha. For as long as we are in the world, it is impossible to run away from or give up everything. As long as life continues, one has to be in actual possession of something or other. His renunciation cannot be complete. It is therefore impracticable to renounce everything in this sense of the term. Nor is it of any use or value. This kind of renunciation will not bring Peace to any person. Its futility is very well illustrated by Vasistha in the story of Chudala and Sikhidhwaja. Renunciation for Vasistha is *only mental*. A person rolling in wealth and ruling over an empire may be more “renounced” than a recluse possessing no penny and having no home. Renunciation is only a mental attitude towards things of the world. It is a feeling that nothing here belongs to any individual, but everything is God’s as the *Isha Upanishad* tells us. (V.58.44; V.34.76; VIa.90.6; V.57.23; VIa. 93.29; VIa.111.21)<sup>55</sup>.

9. **The Practice of Samadhi (intense contemplation of the Absolute): -** The experience of **Samadhi**, when one becomes so deeply merged in the idea of the Absolute Reality that he becomes unaware of everything else, is also one of the methods of dissolving the mind and realising the Absolute Experience. Samadhi according the intense love of the Absolute, as intense occupation of the mind with the thought of the Self. In which one sees all around nothing but Divinity, in which one's own individuality to totally merged and is far below the threshold of one's consciousness. (III.1.36).<sup>56</sup> Samadhi is nothing mysterious. "By *Samadhi* is not meant a state of silence or idleness. It means the intense awareness of the Reality, the highest Intuition which reveals to us things as they are, in which Eternal Peace is felt. The state of existence in which there is no agitation of the mind, in which the ego its ebb, which does not involve the duality of objects, is called *Samadhi*. There is perpetual Samadhi for the great-souled, since, all the time, his mind is identical with the Divine Consciousness (V.62.8-12).<sup>57</sup> "It is," as Plotinus observes, "Sinking into the Divine Essence with an entire loss of self-consciousness".

These are some of the ways of annihilating or dissolving the mind or individuality, in order that the Absolute Experience may be realised and made our own. "The Joy which is experienced when the mind is dissolved is such as cannot be experienced even in ruling over the whole world (V.15.20)><sup>57</sup>

### III. CONTROL AND STOPPAGE OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE PRANA.

Vasistha believes that the *prana* (vital energy of the body) and the mind are very intimately connected. The movements of the *prana* are the physical manifestations of the activity of the mind, and the activities of the mind are the movements of the *prana* manifested on the psychical side. One is the other side of the other. What is the *prana* on the physical plane is the mind on the psychical plane. There is perfect identity and parallelism between the psychical and the physical sides of our being. He seems to agree with the psycho-physical parallelists of modern times that every psychical fact has its co-relative on the physical side and vice versa. But this is true, according to Vasistha, only empirically. Ultimately he is an idealist and spiritualist, and never forgets to point out that even this parallelism is ultimately mind-created (VIb.139.2).<sup>59</sup> In accordance with his parallelistic view he holds that the contact and stoppage of the movements of the *prana* are those of the mind and vice versa. He says "By stopping the movements of the *prana* the mind is surely stopped from its activities. (V.78.15). When the *prana* is at rest, the mind is dissolved" (V.13.83). Similarly, "When the activities of the mind are stopped, the movements of the *prana* also stop" (VIa.69.44).<sup>60</sup>

It is, therefore, important to understand how the activities of the *prana* can be brought under control and how they can be stopped altogether. Unfortunately, however, Vasistha has not made the latter clear. He has very summarily stated the various ways of stopping the activity of the *prana*, probably because it is dangerous to meddle with the activity of the *prana* without a proper guide. The *Prana*, according to him, is the vital energy, the currents

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of which flow all around in the body to keep every organ of the body alive and active. Some current of it moves the eyes; some resides in the skin; some goes to the nose; some digests food; some functions in the tongue. In short the *prana* moves the body as a machine with its own force" (VIa.24.28-30).<sup>61</sup> In order to acquire control over the *prana*, the *yogin* should first practice to have concentration and control over the natural flow of the *prana* in connection with breathing in and breathing out. A number of such *pranayamas* (control over the activities of inhalation and exhalation and stoppage of them) are described by Vasistha which are left our here for want of time at my disposal. (See VIa.25.5-60). But the most important point that should not be lost sight of in this connection is that there are two occasions in the perpetual movement of the *prana*, which deserve attention and concentration of the *yogin*. They are the two *kumbhakas*, the external and the internal: "When the last streak of the *apana* (moon) has subsided in the heart (lit. in the *prana*) and first streak of the *prana* (sun) has not yet taken its rise (i.e. the internal *kumbhakas*), and vice versa, that is the state having stayed in which the *yogin* is no more troubled (VIa.25.36-38,51). When the *prana* has finished itself at a distance of twelve *angulas* (say, 6 inches) and the *apana* has not taken its rise from there yet (i.e. the external *kumbhakas*), that is also a state having stayed in which for a long time, the *yogin* no more suffers from troubles (VIa.25.15-17, 51) "In other words, the *yogin* should try to prolong through practice that state of physical rest in which neither exhalation nor inhalation takes place, when both of them are absent either internally or externally.(VIb.25.34-55).<sup>62</sup>

How this stoppage of the movements of the *prana* and the *apana* is affected is very summarily described in the following passages of the *Yogavasistha*: "The movements of the *Prana* can be stopped through *vairagya* (loss of interest in the world), meditation on the ultimate Cause, practice, proper methods, giving up bad habits (V.13.85); by having a distrust in the world through the study of the sacred literature, company of the good, practice of yoga; through concentration on the object of one's love and meditation on the One Reality; through the practice of the *pranayama* and through meditation in a solitary place; through concentration on the last part of the sound of Om; through making the worldly consciousness sleep; through the practice of *rechaka* when the *prana* is no longer in motion; through the prolonged practice of *kumbhakas*; by directing the current of the *prana* through the upper hole (to the *Brahma-randhra*) by stopping its usual passage with the tongue fixed at the root of the palate; when the consciousness even of concentration is lost in the subtle ether of Consciousness in which there is no activity or thought; when the thinking process stops in concentration at a distance of 12 *angulas* from the tip of the nose; when one attains peace by concentrating on the point between the eyebrows; when the movement of the *prana* is made to be lost in a place within the brain at a distance of 12 *angulas* from the palate, by sending it through the upper hole; through being lost in the thought of the Ether of Consciousness by being desire less and in intense meditation; through attaching the mind to the pure Consciousness which is free from desires; by taking one's stay in the knowledge which flashes into the mind for a moment only on occasions. Through these methods, as well as through others that may be taught by competent teachers, the movements of the *prana* can be stopped" (V.78. 18-31, 38-39).<sup>63</sup>

## THE STAGES OF SELF-REALISATION

Self-realisation is thus the expansion of the individual into the Infinite Absolute Experience; it is the extinction of separateness in the Self which is in all and in which all beings are rooted. It is the transmutation of the individual, with his little and limited material, social and spiritual “*me-s*” into Cosmic Personality who feels his identity and relation with all beings equally; who feels equally under all circumstances, whom nothing binds and who is happy under all circumstances. It is not extinction, but realisation of the Self. It is an extinction only of that felling which keeps us apart and forgetful of the Whole which we really are and makes us an imaginary something, living a life of separation and misery. But this is not an easy task. It takes time for the individual to evolve into the Infinite Whole. What time it may take cannot be fixed as it depends on the effort of each individual. The process may be completed within one life or it may extend over several or countless lives. Although the whole process of removing our ignorance is only a subjective one, yet there is a long distance between the actual, which is the finite individual, and the ideal which is the Absolute Experience. Philosophers who do not believe in the instantaneous and magical realisation of the ideal have always believed in the progressive realisation of it. Once the concept of progressive realisation is admitted, there arises the question of the stages of the progress. Jain philosophers have pointed out 14 definite stages (*gunasthanas*) between the life of an ordinary man and the perfected *Kevalin* (Vide C.R. Jain: *The Practical Path*, p.127). The Mahayana Buddhists have pointed out 10 stages (*bhumikas*) between an aspirant and his realisation of Bodhisattvahood (Vide Keith: *Buddhist Philosophy*, p.291). The Theosophists distinguish five definite stages on the path of perfection from initiation to Masterhood (Vide, Jinarjadasa: *The First Principle of Theosophy*, p.220). Vasistha points out seven stages on the path of realisation of the Cosmic Consciousness. These stages are called *Yoga-bhumikas* or *Jnana-bhumikas*. They are described at several places in the *Yogavasistha* in slightly different ways. According to one statement, the first stage is when the individual, having come to the consciousness of the evils of the individual living, aspires to transcend it (*Subhechchha*). The second, when he philosophises over and investigates into the nature of the Self and the world (*Vicharana*). The third, when on account of the knowledge of its ultimate unreality revealed by philosophical thinking, the individuality (mind) becomes less and less assertive and less felt (*Tanumanasa*). The fourth, when the aspirant begins to feel the being of the Real Self within him (*Sattvapatti*). The fifth, when clinging to the objects of the world is finally overcome through one’s rising above all desires (*Asamsakti*). The sixth, when all things are realised to be unreal apart from the Absolute (*Padarthabhavana*) or (according to another reading) when the individual imagines himself to be the Ultimate Reality (*Padarthabhavana*). And the seventh, when the mystic Experience of being identical with the Absolute Reality is realised within oneself (*Turya*). This is the last door which opens into the shrine of the unspeakable Nirvana. Those who live on the seventh stage, i.e. in conscious realisation of their Divinity, are called *Jivanmuktas* (the Freed living persons). (III.118.8-16).<sup>64</sup>

## THE LIFE OF JIVAN-MUKTI.

The life in which a sage experiences the last stage of Self-realisation is the last life of individuality, which, from the standpoint of his subjective experience, has already been transcended and transmuted, but which, objectively, still continues as a material effect of previous willing in the form of this life. It is a shadow in the material world, as it were, of the previous subjective individuality, which is no longer in existence. Thought, it seems, takes time to be materialised in the objective world, like the light of distant stars in reaching our eyes. It is possible that a star, whose light is reaching us now and so giving us the impression of its present existence, may have been long ago effaced out of existence, if it was distant enough. To us the existence of such a star is a fact, but in the world where the star actually was, it is no longer in existence and no longer perceived. So is the case with the individuality of a *Jivanmukta*, a sage who has totally dissolved his individuality and who actually does not feel to be an individual in the world of Spirit and Thought, but who appears to be living, nay actually lives in the physical world, as an effect, as a passing shadow, of the previous individuality. His life is a reality to others, but an appearance in his mind, and unreal for his Self in which he now has his conscious being. How such a person lives and behaves in the world is very elaborately described in *Yogavasistha*. Here are some of the statements<sup>65</sup>: - "Pleasures do not delight him; pains do not distress (VIb.169.1). Deep, violent and continued states of pleasure or pain do not produce in him the feeling of like or dislike (VIb.197.27). Although externally engaged in worldly actions, he has no attachment in his heart to any object whatsoever (VIb.19.8). His conduct does not annoy anybody; he behaves like an ideal citizen and a friend of all. Outwardly he is very busy, but he is very calm and quiet at heart (VIb.98.5). He is free from the restrictions of caste, creed, station in life, custom and Scriptures (VIA.122.2). He rests undisturbed in the Supreme Bliss (VIA.122.4). He does not work for himself, as he is ever happy and does not hang his joy on anything else. (VIb.122.5). His face is always cheerful (VIb.116.3). He behaves with his fellow beings as the occasion demands, without the least stain on his mind. He plays like a child in the company of children; he is a youth among the young; and he acts as an old man in the company of the aged ones. He is full of courage in the party of courageous people; and shares the misery of the miserable (V.77.13-14). There is nothing which he has to achieve. He, therefore, performs and gives up actions without much concern like a child (V.77.25). He never feels despondent, proud, agitated, cast down, troubled or elated (V.77.32). He is full of cleverness and magnanimity even when surrounded by enemies (V.18-6). He regards his activities as a part of the Cosmic Movement and performs them without any personal desire (V.6.1.). He never hankers after the pleasures that are not in his hand, but enjoys all those he has (IV.46.8). The idea of "I" and "Mine", of something to be achieved and something to be avoided, has completely died within him (IV.16.20). Even doing all sorts of actions, the liberated one is always in *samadhi* (V.62.6). He is a great worker (*maha karta*). He works without anxiety, egoistic feeling, pride or impurity of heart. (VIA.115.13). He is a great enjoyer (*maha bhokta*). He does not discard the pleasures that he has got nor desires the pleasures that he has not got (IV.46.8). He enjoys equally old age, death, misery, poverty and ruling over an empire (VIA.115.25). He does not make any of the natural functions of his body paralyse for want of

## Self-Realization or Deification of Man

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proper exercise. His body is a kingdom unto him, over which he rules wisely and well. He keeps it healthy and does not starve it of the appropriate requirements (IV. 23.1-2, 18, 29, 45; VIa.104, 40-44). The life of the sage who has realised his Divinity is really the noblest and the happiest life. From him goodness is scattered all around (V.39.53). Having seen him, having heard about him, having met with him, and having remembered him all creatures feel delighted (V.39, 54). He has no longer any struggle for livelihood. The guardian angels of the world protect and support him, as they do the entire Cosmos (IV.32, 38-39).

Having left this body when the effects of the previous *samkalpas* (wishing) are exhausted, the Freed Man either merges in the Divine Essence, or, being always fully conscious of his Divinity, takes up the roll of the Cosmic Deities which govern the Cosmos and disseminate knowledge (III.9.16-25).<sup>66</sup>

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